

427 government, and a new one, the Central League of Finnish Trade Unions (Suomen Ammattiyhdistysten Keskusliitto, abbreviated to SAK), theoretically independent of all political parties, was established.

441 Simultaneously with the workers, the employers began to organize, and in 1917 individual branches were gathered under the Central Federation of Finnish Employers (Suomen Työnantajain Keskusliitto, STK). Its most recent membership was 2,374, as compared to a total of 227,762 workers.

● 468 Employers, however, were reluctant to enter into collective agreements, for they considered the trade unions to be too much under political influence. But since the war years a noteworthy change has occurred, and in 1944 the Central Federation of Finnish Employers and the Central

468 League of Finnish Trade Unions concluded a general agreement concerning the handling of labor questions. Since then, collective agreements have become common, especially in industry, but also in agriculture and forestry. They are drawn by several employers or a registered association of employers and, on the other side, by one or more registered workers' associations.

Disputes and strikes did not start in Finland until the turn of the century. Generally, work stoppages have been frequent in good times and rare in bad times, when little is to be gained by a strike. Since World War II stoppages have been common because of political and economic unrest, and many trade unions, driven by Communist agitation, have gone on strike without the permission of the Central League. The

● 468 following table shows the number of stoppages in recent years:

	<u>Number of stoppages</u>	<u>Number of workers affected</u>	<u>Number of work days lost</u>
1931-35	15 (average)	1, 885 (average)	32, 206 (average)
1936-40	26 (average)	3, 836 (average)	118, 248 (average)
1941-45	23 (average)	7, 582 (average)	76, 948 (average)
1946	42	18, 913	115, 984
1947	228	114, 739	479, 496
1948	84	16, 157	232, 824

The government takes an active interest in labor disputes, especially since stoppages in work in the post-war years were fatal for the scheduled

- 468 delivery of war reparations to the Soviet Union.

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[468] From 1946 on, a special Labor Court has been in operation which deals with disputes concerning the validity, application and content of collective agreements. The members of the Court consist of a president and 8 members, appointed by the President of the Republic, the president and two of the members directly, the other on the recommendation of the employers' and employees' organizations. The findings of the Labor Court are final. In 1948, during its first year of operation, the Labor Court dealt with 13 cases, 9 of which were submitted by employers' federations, 3 by workers' associations, and 1 by the public authorities.

465 The Factory Committees, prescribed by law,
466 act as mediators in the settlement of disputes between employers, workers and staff personnel,

as mentioned in Subparagraph 1m. In addition,

there are government-appointed mediators, whose duties are outlined in a law of 1946.

These mediators hold office only three years at a time, and each has a specific territory in which he is expected to follow the development of labor relations. A strike is forbidden unless the party concerned has submitted to the proper mediator and, to the opposing party, duly witnessed warning of the strike threat at least two weeks prior to the proposed date. The mediator must immediately inform the Ministry of Social Affairs, and must call a mediation conference, which the employer and the trade union involved are obligated to attend. If no agreement is achieved, the mediator again has to inform the Ministry without delay.

000 The League of the Trade Unions is a powerful